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General Assembly

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New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Amir of the State of Kuwait

The President: This morning, it is our sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Amir of the State of Kuwait, who passed away on Sunday, 15 January 2006.

As a distinguished leader of his country for almost three decades, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah skilfully and wisely managed the political, economic and social affairs of the State of Kuwait. His vision made it possible for Kuwait to assume prominent leadership positions not only in the Arab and Islamic world, but also internationally and within the United Nations.

The late Amir led Kuwait through a successful era of development and growth, taking many crucial steps towards his country's modernization and the enhancement of quality of life for its citizens. During the time of crisis in the early 1990s, which we all recall, the late Amir's tireless efforts to restore Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity earned him deep admiration among the Kuwaiti people and in the world community. He will be remembered for his wisdom and for his dedicated service to his country and to the Kuwaiti people.

On this occasion, let us also recognize the tranquil transition of power in Kuwait and extend our best wishes to the late Amir's successor, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, on the assumption of his high office.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I ask the representative of the State of Kuwait to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of Kuwait and to the bereaved family of High Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): I stand here on behalf of the African Group to convey our deepest condolences to the bereaved family and to the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait on the sad event of the passing away of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait.

The late Amir cared for his people and contributed immensely to the welfare and development of the State in his successive capacities as Prime Minister, Crown Prince and ruler of the State of

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Kuwait. He will be remembered for his role in modernizing his country and bringing it to the forefront of international recognition. He was appreciated by many as the embodiment of unity, stability, justice and freedom, and he spared no effort whatsoever to protect the sovereignty of his State. Africa will remember him for his deep understanding of the problems of the continent, and even more for his generosity. We wish his successor well in the execution of his new responsibilities.

May Allah grant the late Amir eternal peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): I have the honour to pay tribute, on behalf of the Asian Group, to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Amir of the State of Kuwait, who, sadly, passed away on 15 January 2006.

Sheikh Jaber, as he was widely known, was a man of vision and courage who devoted his entire life to the cause of peace and development. His 28 years of tireless service and wise leadership contributed greatly to the prosperity of his country. In Kuwait, he was regarded as Baba Jaber, the father of the nation, and will be remembered in particular as a great man who was able to translate his dreams into reality for the benefit of his people.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber was a great statesman and a well-respected international figure. He was interested in helping people in need not only in Kuwait, but also all over the world. Kuwaitis and the international community as a whole have lost a great leader who touched and inspired the lives of millions of people.

I wish to convey the most sincere condolences of the members of the Asian Group to the Government and the people of Kuwait and to the family and friends of Sheikh Jaber.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Serbia and Montenegro, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Kruljević (Serbia and Montenegro): I would like, on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, to offer our deepest condolences to the people and the Government of Kuwait in the wake of the passing, in January, of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait.

Designated Prime Minister in 1965 and Crown Prince in 1966, the late Amir became the ruler of Kuwait in December 1977. During his long and distinguished reign, the Amir was tireless in promoting the modernization of Kuwait, which brought well-being and prosperity to his people. Under his strong impetus, Kuwait achieved high international standing and progress was made in consolidating the country's institutions and democratization. During his reign, the State achieved prosperity and made strides towards greater political freedom, women's rights and social justice.

Kuwait has lost a statesman who oversaw its development during both its most prosperous and its most difficult period. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad will be remembered for safeguarding the Amirate's stability, independence and prosperity.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Bolivia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ms. Terrazas Ontiveros (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, which Bolivia has the honour of chairing, to express our heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of Kuwait on the recent passing of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

As we extend our deepest sympathy to his family, we join in the well-deserved tribute to the Amir for the tireless work that he carried out in the service of his country, which we hope will prove to be a constant source of inspiration to present and future generations of Kuwaitis.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Spain, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like, on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, to express our deepest condolences to the people and the Government of Kuwait on the passing of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait.

The international community has lost an outstanding leader. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was the ruler of Kuwait for more than 28 years, during which time he wisely guided his country towards economic prosperity, social modernization and political openness. He introduced into Kuwait's political culture progressive approaches to the development of the principle of democratic openness and of women's rights in an Islamic society.

During his long reign, the late Amir lived through very difficult times, but he was able to lead the Kuwaiti people towards the recovery of their sovereignty and territorial integrity, with the support of the international community. He thereby earned the admiration and respect of the world's nations, which saw in his achievements a model of leadership within the Arab world.

On this sad occasion, our thoughts and prayers are with his family and with the Government and the people of Kuwait, to whom we express our warmest wishes for stability and prosperity in the future.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): On behalf of the United States Government, I extend my deep sympathies to the Government and the people of Kuwait on the passing of Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Jaber was a steadfast friend of the United States. He led his country through its darkest hour, when many believed that the brutal invasion ordered by Saddam Hussein in 1990 would erase Kuwait from the world map. A close bond developed at that time between the Government and the people of Kuwait and the United States of America, and that bond continues to be just as strong today. The United States mourns with the people of Kuwait the passing of His Highness the Amir.

Throughout the difficult time following the events of August 1990, Sheikh Jaber never wavered in his faith that right would prevail; he provided hope and confidence to his people. When he returned to Kuwait after the 1991 liberation, he unified the country under the Kuwaiti Constitution and oversaw elections and the re-establishment of Kuwait's parliament. Last May, in what will no doubt be an important part of his legacy, he succeeded in leading the generation-long effort to extend full political rights to Kuwaiti women. When Kuwaiti women vote in the next parliamentary elections, it will in part be a tribute to a wise leader who understood that for a society to grow and prosper, all citizens must have a say in its governance.

Sheikh Jaber also understood first-hand that the threats of terrorism and dictatorship must be confronted and that national leaders need to stand together to protect civilization and government from those who would rule by fear and force. Under his leadership, relations between Kuwait and the United States grew deep and strong. Kuwait has been a vital partner in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and in the global campaign to combat extremism and terrorism.

The United States will miss Sheikh Jaber's leadership and friendship, but we know that his experienced successor, Sheikh Sabah, whom we know well and with whom we look forward to working in his new capacity, will uphold Sheikh Jaber's legacy and will continue to follow the example he set of dedication to his people and his country.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Jordan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, our great sorrow at the death of Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. May his soul rest in peace. His passing is a loss to the whole world. I would like to extend to the people, the leaders and the Government of Kuwait our condolences on the passing of Sheikh Jaber. The Group of Arab States would like to express its solidarity with the brotherly Kuwaiti people at this sad time.

I would also like to recall, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the great contribution of Sheikh Jaber. He dedicated his life to the service of his country and his nation. He laid the foundations for a new, modern State that could achieve progress in the brotherly country of Kuwait.

We hope that God Almighty will be merciful to the late Emir and allow him to dwell in heaven. We also hope that the Kuwaiti people and Government will be able to overcome this tragedy. From God we come and to him we return.

The President: I now call on the representative of Kuwait.

Ms. Al-Mulla (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank you, Sir, the Secretary-General and all members who have conveyed their condolences to us on the passing of His Highness Sheikh Jaber, the father of all Kuwaitis and Emir of the State of Kuwait, who passed away on Sunday, 15 January.

Throughout his reign of over 28 years, Kuwait went through many extraordinary experiences. Despite the many challenges to Kuwait and the crises in the region, he successfully led our country with his wise vision and policies and maintained the sovereignty, stability and security of our country. He made commendable efforts throughout his life in the service of Kuwait, leading to the country's rebirth in all areas. Throughout his reign, Kuwait enjoyed great progress in the fields of education, culture, health, the entrenchment of democracy, the observance of human rights, and international relations.

In 1990, he appealed to the international community from this rostrum to assert Kuwait's rights and to take the necessary steps to free it and restore its legitimacy, in accordance with the text and articles of the United Nations Charter. The international community responded by setting a precedent through the adoption of a common position, thus allowing Kuwait to regain its independence and freedom and to shake off the evil occupation. In 1991, again from this rostrum, the late Sheikh also conveyed the gratitude and thanks of the people and Government of Kuwait to States Members of the United Nations for their noble stance in defence of our people's rights and in assertion of international legitimacy.

The late Sheikh worked tirelessly to entrench the values of understanding and solidarity with Arab and Islamic States and with all States of the world. In 1998, in addressing from this rostrum the issue of assistance to developing countries, he was among the first leaders to call for the partial cancellation of the debts of the least developed countries. He called on the international financial institutions to ease credit terms for the developing countries.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber adopted noble positions that left their mark on the people of Kuwait. I recall with pride the honour he conferred on me in asking me to represent Kuwait as its first female ambassador, thus demonstrating his great interest in the cause of women. The international community will recall his historic decision to permit Kuwaiti women to stand for election and to vote, as they did in 2005, reflecting his interest in women's rights.

His Highness will live forever in the hearts of his people, the Islamic and Arab world, and friendly countries. History will record his noble achievements. We ask God to be merciful to him and to reward him for his great work on behalf of his people and humankind as a whole.

Kuwait was guided by His Highness Sheikh Jaber in its progress towards cooperation with all countries in enshrining the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. His Highness proudly raised Kuwait's standard when our country joined the United Nations in 1963. Some of my colleagues will surely recall His Highness's participation at the United Nations throughout his 40-year career. International consensus and the great trust which His Highness enjoyed reflect his extraordinary ability, wisdom and experience in holding high the torch of Kuwait and in advancing its cause and working for his people.

The President: I ask the representative of Kuwait to convey the condolences of the entire General Assembly to the Government and people of Kuwait and to the family of His Highness Sheikh Jaber. We also ask her to convey our respectful best wishes to his successor, His Highness Sheikh Sabah, and his Government.

Agenda item 128 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/60/650, A/60/650/Add.1, A/60/650/Add.2, A/60/650/Add.3 and A/60/650/Add.4)

The President: I should now like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/60/650 and addenda 1, 2, 3 and 4 thereto, containing five letters from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

In document A/60/650, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that 20 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter. May I remind delegations that, under

Article 19 of the Charter, a Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years.

In documents A/60/650/Add.1, A/60/650/Add.2, A/60/650/Add.3 and A/60/650/Add.4, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/60/650, Afghanistan, Nauru, the Congo and the Republic of Moldova have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in those documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 48 (*continued*)

Sport for peace and development

(a) Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Solemn appeal made by the President of the General Assembly in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce (A/60/662)

The President: I shall now read out the solemn appeal made by the President of the General Assembly in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce, contained in document A/60/662.

I shall now read out the solemn appeal.

"The ancient Greek tradition of the *ekecheiria*, or 'Olympic Truce', was born in the eighth century B.C., serving as a hallowed principle of the Olympic Games. In 1992, the International Olympic Committee renewed this tradition by calling upon all nations to observe the Truce.

"Through its resolution 48/11 of 25 October 1993, the General Assembly urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce from the seventh day before the opening to the seventh day following the closing of each Olympic Games. This appeal was renewed in the Millennium Declaration.

"In the 2005 World Summit Outcome, our leaders underlined that 'sports can foster peace and development', and encouraged discussions in the General Assembly for proposals leading to a plan of action on sport and development.

"On 3 November 2005, the General Assembly held a plenary debate on the agenda item 'Sport for peace and development', and also adopted, with universal support, resolution 60/8, entitled 'Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic Ideal'. In that resolution, the General Assembly urged Member States to observe, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, the Olympic Truce, individually or collectively, during the XX Olympic Winter Games, to be held in Turin, Italy, from 10 to 26 February 2006, and the subsequent Paralympic Winter Games, also to be held in Turin, from 10 to 19 March 2006, by ensuring the safe passage and participation of athletes at the Games.

"The Olympic movement aspires to contribute to a peaceful future for humankind through the educational value of sport. It brings together athletes from all parts of the world in the greatest of international sports events, the Olympic Games, and it aims to promote the maintenance of peace, mutual understanding and goodwill — goals it shares with the United Nations.

"As an expression of these common objectives, in 1998 the International Olympic Committee decided to fly the United Nations flag at all competition sites of the Olympic Games. The United Nations, for its part, is expanding its cooperation with the International Olympic Committee, in particular through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

"As President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and a member of the Board of the International Truce Foundation, I solemnly appeal to all Member States to demonstrate their commitment to the Olympic Truce and to take appropriate measures to ensure a peaceful global

environment for the 2006 Winter Olympic Games."

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 48, and of agenda item 48 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: reopening of the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 71

The President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/60/L.47, circulated under sub-item (b) of agenda item 71, entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 71 at its 69th plenary meeting, on 23 December 2005.

As indicated in the footnote to document A/60/L.47, in order to enable the General Assembly to consider the draft decision before it, it will be necessary to re-open its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 71. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to re-open its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 71?

It was so decided.

The President: Members will recall that, at its 17th plenary meeting, on 20 September 2005, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (b) of agenda item 71 to the Third Committee.

In order for the General Assembly to proceed expeditiously with its consideration of the draft decision that has been issued as document A/60/L.47 under the sub-item, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider sub-item (b) of agenda item 71 directly in plenary meeting under heading D of the agenda, "Promotion of human rights"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 71?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 71 (*continued*)

Human rights questions

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Draft decision (A/60/L.47)

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/60/L.47, entitled "Khmer Rouge trials".

I should like to announce that, since the publication of draft decision A/60/L.47, the following countries have become co-sponsors of the draft decision: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/60/L.47?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: I call on the representative of Pakistan, who has asked to speak in explanation of position on the draft decision just adopted.

Mr. Hussain (Pakistan): We have agreed to support the draft decision that has just been adopted. But there are a couple of questions with regard to which we would like clarification from the sponsors.

The draft decision was presented as a sort of fait accompli. We understand that there are good intentions behind it and that it will contribute to the ongoing efforts at reconciliation in the country concerned. We certainly support that. But what are the legal implications for other countries? We are not very clear on that. I tried to find out from the relevant experts.

Given the way the draft decision was presented and given its legal implications, I think we need some clarification from the sponsors. It would be in order for us to be provided such clarification, so that we can explain to our authorities what exactly it is that we have endorsed in the Hall.

The President: The representative of Pakistan has asked the sponsors of draft decision A/60/L.47 to elaborate on its legal implications. The draft decision has been adopted, but there has been a legitimate request for clarification. I shall therefore give the sponsors a moment to think about whether they want to respond spontaneously here in the Hall or whether they want to consider another way to convey their answer, through direct communication with the representative of Pakistan.

It appears that there is indeed an answer. But to elaborate it spontaneously in the General Assembly Hall would be a pretty heavy task. I understand from the sponsors that a reply will be forwarded to the delegation of Pakistan as soon as possible. I am sure that this will be taken care of in a bilateral fashion.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 71.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.